

LET'S GET WASHINGTON COVERED: Restructuring Health Insurance Task Force
August 20, 2003 meeting
1:30 – 4:30pm, Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport, SeaTac, Washington

IN ATTENDANCE: Commissioner Mike Kreidler

Representing Consumers: Adair Dammann, Washington State Council, Service Employees International Union; Tom Jones, Community Choice Healthcare Network; Barbara Flye, Washington Citizen Action Council; Sean Corry, Sprague, Israel, Giles, Inc.; Ed Singler, Washington AARP

Representing Insurers: Yori Milo, Premera Blue Cross; Margaret Stanley, Regence Blue Shield; Pam MacEwan, Group Health Cooperative

Representing Providers: Rhonda Hauff, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services; Paul Tucker, Highline Community Hospital; Thomas Curry, Washington Medical Association; Lori Bielinski, Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Representing Purchasers: Laura Boyd, Health Care Purchasers and Association of Washington Business; Pete Cutler, Health Care Authority; Cynthia Voortman, Washington Association of Health Underwriters; Gary Smith, Independent Business Association; Carolyn Logue, National Federation of Independent Business

OIC: Michael Arnis, Ann Eddy, Valerie Gerst, George Xu, Bill Daley

The minutes from July 23, 2003 meeting were adopted.

Commissioner Kreidler welcomed the task force members. He reviewed the July 23 meeting noting that he thought the task force had a very productive discussion in the morning but felt that the afternoon discussion delved too quickly into solutions. He feels they need to focus their discussion around the data. This meeting will focus on information and he'd like the task force members to focus on the uninsured and issues surrounding costs of administration.

The Commissioner reviewed the proposed timeline. The task force has time to develop options before the legislative session.

PRESENTATIONS

Michael Arnis lead a discussion on the characteristics of the uninsured; the cost impacts of administration and mandates; and the impact that fragmentation has on the current health care system.

Michael Arnis asked members of the task force to volunteer for 3 different projects to prepare for the September 24 task force meeting and for the October 15 & 16 retreat.

Project 1: Estimating the amount of uncompensated care, bad debt, and cost-shifting within the Washington State health insurance system;
Project 2: Assessing benefit mandates, access regulations, and administrative practices within the Washington State health insurance system;
Project 3: Analyzing fragmentation of the health insurance market within Washington State.

OPEN MICROPHONE

Kari Scott, Project Coordinator, Spokane Health Improvement Project, described their project. They researched the demographics of the uninsured by holding focus groups and surveying 300 businesses. They found that the uninsured were low income people and many worked for small businesses. Some small businesses that had high paying jobs like engineering tended to insure their employees; but the lower paid service and construction employers did not tend to insure their employees.

Commissioner Kreidler thanked the OIC staff for their efforts in collecting the data for the presentations at the meeting. An array of options that have come from comments made at task force meetings will be sent out to task force members for comment. There will be more data at the September meeting clarifying some of the comments and questions raised today.

The October 22 task force meeting is cancelled due to the scheduled retreat on October 15 & 16 at Port Ludlow.

Respectfully submitted, Valerie Gerst